



TOWN OF ACTON
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Review Memorandum: 296 & 298 Central Street
Room 126, Town Hall
June 1, 2016

DRB Members in attendance: Peter Darlow (Assistant Chair), David Honn, & Kim Montella.

Proponents: Andrea Gonsalves – Assabet Properties
Scott Hayes – Foresite Engineering

Documents Review: Proposed Plot Plan, Dated April 11, 2016 by Foresite Engineering
Front Elevation & Floor Plans (4 Pages, Undated) by Concord Lumber Corporation

The existing site is comprised of two lots and two small existing single family homes that are very close to the street (<20'). The site has a gentle upward slope from east to west (front to back) with the slope becoming steeper as you go towards the western property line (rear) of the site. The site is in the Village Residential Zone.

The proposed project involves razing the homes and constructing a single duplex building set back approximately 66' from the front property line. The proposed entrances to the two units are clustered in the middle of the building and the two double garages are located at the ends of the building and both have double wide, paved drives to the street. The septic system is proposed to be in the front yard, partially under the paved driveways. This project requires a Special Permit from the ZBA.

The main concerns of the DRB are the entrance area of the building, the prominence of the garage doors and the width of the two double wide driveways. All of these elements contradict the Acton 20/20 charge of creating pedestrian-friendly developments. The entrance doorways to the units are recessed and the current stairway configuration physically and visually blocks the unit doors from the street and the wide driveways and garage locations create a vehicle-focused image.

The proponents have made some efforts to minimize the effect of the garage doors with small shed roofs over the doors.

The DRB made several suggestions to reduce the emphasis of these features: Redesign the entrance area to make it more prominent (keeping the scale of the building in mind) and create a

more open entryway, narrow the driveways at the street and widen them at the garage locations or design a shared driveway that splits at the units with hammer-head turn around areas, and add a sidewalk from the duplex to the street.

The DRB suggests the proponents return to the DRB with a redesign that includes these proposed revisions as well as the proposed landscaping and proposed architectural treatments for the sides of the building that incorporates some of the elements from the front façade.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Montella
DRB Member